

VA Pacific Island Health Care System
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The VA Pacific Island Health Care System (formerly VAMROC Honolulu), serves primarily Veterans, but also other federal beneficiaries in the Pacific Region. Rural communities everywhere face challenges brought by geographic separation, lack of infrastructure and small populations that have difficulty commanding assets to assure access to health care. These challenges are even more acute our far-flung domain, the vast Pacific region where water barriers compound distance isolation.

Our rural patients have gained significant benefit though access to telehealth services. Learning from this we hope to expand access to care through telehealth to Veterans who cannot travel regularly, easily or at reasonable cost, to points of care. Veterans who earned their benefits tough service out us all, may be penalized merely because they wish to return to their homes in rural areas. Telehealth, through the RHCD/USAC subsidies has been an enabling factor in mitigating this situation.

The redefinition of the term “rural” will significantly impact the access to care for patients currently being served as well as our ability to expand service in the future. As such we would like to joint and support the American Telemedicine Association in their Petition for Reconsideration of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Second Report and Order.

Respectfully Submitted,
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VA Pacific Island Health Care System